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ART. II.—*The Páramitá-hṛidaya Sútra, or, in Chinese, “Mo-ho-pō-ye-po-lo-mih-to-sin-king,” i.e., “The Great Páramitá Heart Sútra.”* Translated from the Chinese by the Rev. S. BEAL, Chaplain, R.N.

[Presented December, 1863.]

THIS Sútra consists of about two hundred and fifty characters. It is repeated in the course of the daily worship of the Buddhists, by rote, as a mantra would be repeated (according to Colebrooke, pp. 8, 9, Relig. of Hindoos,) by the Hindoos. In its composition it resembles, or appears to resemble, the sacred writings of the Brahmans. No author's name is attached to it. It does not even begin with the usual preface “thus have I heard” (evam mayá śrutam). But we have mentioned in it the Rishi to whom it was communicated, and the Devatá from whom it proceeded. In this particular, at any rate, it strongly resembles the Vedic model. And when we recollect that the later Buddhists attempted in every possible way to absorb the system of the Brahmans in their own, yielding so far as they dared to popular superstitions, we shall not wonder in finding so many similarities, in externals at least, between the two religions.

From its brevity we may suppose that this Sútra is a condensed form of the larger Páramitá works, abbreviated for the sake of frequent repetition, or, it is possible, that the larger works are but an expansion of this or some other equally curt production (Wassiljew, Der Buddhismus, s. 145).

This Sútra was probably the first translated by the celebrated pilgrim Hsiouen Thsang. At any rate, it stands first in the authorized Chinese collection. Some interest attaches to it, moreover, on account of the numerous commentaries on its text, which have been published by a succession of learned Chinese priests. This work is the key, as it were, to the

doctrines of the contemplative or mystic school of Buddhists. This school has taken firm root in the southern districts of China. Hence we find that the most numerous and important editions of the "Heart Sútra" have issued from monasteries in the southern provinces. The most ample, and perhaps most learned (if tedium is a proof of learning) commentary I have met with is that of a priest (Chan sse) called Tai Teën. He was the instructor of a celebrated person, called Han-chang-li, otherwise named Han U, or Han-wen-kung, who was vice-president of the Board of Punishment during the reign of the 11th Emperor of the Tang dynasty. "This officer was originally a strict Confucianist. The Emperor had sent (A.D. 819) some mandarins to escort a bone of Buddha from a place called Fung-tsian-fu, in the province of Shensi, to the capital. All the court, common people, eunuchs and ladies, vied with each other in their idolatrous adoration of this relic. Han-chang-li, however, indignant at their conduct, took this opportunity of presenting a strongly worded remonstrance to the Emperor, which he styled 'Fuh-kuh-hin,' *i.e.*, Memorial on the bone of Buddha. For this honest exposition of his feelings, he was degraded from his post, and appointed prefect of a distant department, called Chiu Chau, in the province of Kwang Tung." After a year's residence in this place he fell sick, and was thus brought in contact with a priest called Tai Teen. To him the exiled mandarin confided his thoughts. A lasting and close friendship ensued. The consequence was, that the celebrated Han-chang-li became a believer in the Buddhist doctrine he had once despised and protested against. We may reasonably suppose that the "Heart Sútra" of Tai Teen was the subject of frequent and earnest consideration with this conscientious officer; and as his appeal against the worship of the relic of Buddha is still authoritatively published and read to the common people, to dissuade them from such superstitions, the fact of the author of that tract having himself become a Buddhist through a consideration of the Sútra we now are about to translate, becomes at least an interesting circumstance in connection with it.

The text and commentary of Tai Teēn, which I have used, were republished in 1850 by a scholar (Tau jin), named Woo Tsing Tseu.

Avalokiteśvara. [The Devatá of the Sútra.]

When the Prajná Páramítá has been fully practised, then we clearly behold that the five skandha are all empty, vain, and unreal. So it is we escape the possibility of sorrow or obstruction.

Śáriputra. [The Rishi of the Sútra.]

That which we call form (rúpa) is not different from that which we call space (ákáśa). Space is not different from form. Form is the same as space. Space is the same as form.

And so with the other skandhas, whether vedaná, or sanjná, or sanskára, or vijnána, (they are each the same as their opposite).

Śáriputra.

All these things around us (ye dhammá) being thus stript or devoid of qualities (lakshaṇa), there can be no longer birth or death, defilement or purity, addition or destruction. In the midst then of this void (ákáśa), there can be neither rúpa, vedaná, sanjná, sanskára, or vijnána (*i.e.*, neither of the five skandha), nor yet organs of sense, whether the eye, or nose, ear, or tongue, body or mind (chitta), nor yet objects of sense, *i.e.* matter (rúpa), or sound, odour, or taste, touch, or ideas (chaitta), nor yet categories of sense (dhátu), such as the union of the object and subject in sight, in smell, in touch, in taste, in apprehension.

So there will be no such thing as ignorance (avidyá), nor yet freedom from ignorance, and therefore there can be none of its consequences (*viz.*, the twelve nidánas. Colebrooke, p. 255); and therefore no such thing as decay or death (jará or marana), nor yet freedom from decay and death. So neither can there be a method (or way) for destroying the concourse of sorrows. No such thing as wisdom, and no such thing as attaining (happiness or rest), as there will not be ought that can be attained.

The Bodhisatwa resting on this Prajná Páramítá, no sorrow or obstruction can then affect his heart, for there will be no

such thing as sorrow or obstruction. Therefore, having no fear or apprehension of evil, removing far from him all the distorting influences of illusive thought, he arrives at the goal of Nirvána.

The Buddhas of the three ages, relying on this Prajná Páramitá, have arrived at the “unsurpassed and enlightened” condition (samyak-sambodhi).

Therefore we know that this Prajná Páramitá is the Great Spiritual Dhárañí,—it is the Great Light-giving Dhárañí. This is the unsurpassed Dhárañí. This is the unequalled Dhárañí, able to destroy all sorrows. True and real, (*i.e.*, full of meaning), not vain (*i.e.*, unmeaning). Therefore we repeat (or let us repeat) the Prajná Páramitá Dhárañí.

Then also say—

Ki-tai, Ki-tai,
Po-lo, Ki-tai,
Po-lo-seng-Kitai,
Bo-tái-sah-po-ho.

i.e. [according to M. Julien’s system] :

Gati, Gati, Paragati, Parasangati, Bodhisatvah,
[words I cannot attempt to explain.]